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Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary

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OFFICE OF  
COMMISSIONER  
SUSAN NESS

Attention: Commissioner Susan Ness

Dear Ms. Ness;

I am writing you in hopes that you might can help me, if not, then maybe you can put me in touch with someone who can. I got your name out of an article recently in The Florence Morning News, concerning the Hearing Impaired, and how they will benefit under the new rules being set by the F.C.C. I think that is great, that they have helped the hearing impaired. But would you answer one question for me, why is so much attention given to the Hearing Impaired, and not to persons with a Speech Impairment? I realize that the majority of Mute people are also deaf, as well. But not all of them are and it seems that very little is done for those of us who can hear but have a speech problem. I have a speaking problem, ~~to the ex~~ which began over 20 years ago and progressed so that now I cannot speak at all, I can hear. Over the years, I sought nor received help from anyone, until recently I decided to go try speech therapy. Wynn English, at McLeod Hospital Speech Center, here in Florence, S.C. tried to help me. But she was unable to do so, and due to a muscular problem, I was unable to do sign language. I could learn them, but my hands would not cooperate, since then I had my hand operated on and have been seeking having hand therapy. But, the operation, and hand therapy didn't work well enough to enable me to carry out signing. While I was seeing Wynn English, she introduced me to a Communication Device, called Real Voice, by Epson. It was like a lap computer which I was able to type my message into and it would speak for me. Until then, I never knew such a device existed, but they cost over \$3,000. I draw S.S.I. so there is no way that I could afford this machine. Mrs. English sought help from Medicaid but they refused me. Something about it being a luxury!! What kind of fools work there, of course it would be a luxury to me. Why should that keep them from paying for it!! If I was Deaf, would that make a difference to them? It seems a little unfair to me, it would seem like anything they could do to make life easier for a non speaker, they would do it. If only they could experience the frustration I endure in not being able to converse with anyone. I stated earlier that I underwent hand surgery recently, and was under the doctors care for about 6 months, then therapy for about two months. Had I been able to converse at all, it would have been so much easier on me, as well as on the doctors, nurses, family. Had I owned the Real Voice, or anything similar to it, it could have saved us all a great deal of frustration. When I go to my doctor, for my check-up, or to any doctor I have to type what I want to say the day before. This old typewriter is my only means of communication, and it is almost worn out. I have an outdated, worn out T.D.D. given to me by a friend. But it might work one minute and not work the next. So, I can't depend on it. And it doesn't have a printer so when I have incoming information, I have to have a family member beside me to write it down. (My writing has went to the dogs, also.) I asked about trading it in, but they don't

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Susan, can you help me get either the Real Voice or some other device so that I can speak and communicate with the world. It doesn't have to be any expensive means of communication, whatever I can get will be more than I have had over the 20 years I have been without speech. The TDD machine would be great but I need something I can carry with me that talks..something portable. I don't know how much influence the FCC has concerning medicaid, but maybe there is someone else who can help me get the machine, since Medicaid won't.

It seems like so much is done for everyone else with all sorts of disabilities and I feel like just as much should be done for any non-speaker as would be done for the Deaf-Non-Speaking person.

Should you need to contact me, for any farther information, my phone number is at the heading of my letter. I live with my Parents, so they will relay any message. Or feel free to write me. Should you have access to a TDD, call me and I will return your call. Or try to, as I stated it works sometimes, and then again, it doesn't. Please excuse my mistakes, will be waiting to hear from you.

Thank you for any help you can give me.  
I will try not to get impatient but when you have been trying to get help to funding a Communication Device for a year, or more, and you are no farther along than when you started, as I am, then you tend to get a little aggravated!!

But thanks again.

A. Kate Prosser